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24 **UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT**
25 **FOR THE CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA**

26 NOVEON SURGERY CENTER, INC.

27 Plaintiff,

28 v.

CIGNA HEALTH AND LIFE
INSURANCE COMPANY, et al.

Defendants.

Case No. 2:23-CV-00377-MWF-MAR
[Hon. Michael W. Fitzgerald]

STIPULATED PROTECTIVE ORDER

**[DISCOVERY MATTER: Referred to
Magistrate Judge Margo A. Rocconi]**

Complaint Filed: January 18, 2023
Trial Date: April 23, 2024

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSES AND LIMITATIONS

Discovery in this action is likely to involve production of confidential, proprietary, or private information for which special protection from public disclosure and from use for any purpose other than prosecuting this litigation may be warranted. Accordingly, the parties hereby stipulate to and petition the Court to enter the following Stipulated Protective Order. The parties acknowledge that this Order does not confer blanket protections on all disclosures or responses to discovery and that the protection it affords from public disclosure and use extends only to the limited information or items that are entitled to confidential treatment under the applicable legal principles. The parties further acknowledge, as set forth in Section 12.3, below, that this Stipulated Protective Order does not entitle them to file confidential information under seal; Civil Local Rule 79-5 sets forth the procedures that must be followed and the standards that will be applied when a party seeks permission from the court to file material under seal.

1.2 GOOD CAUSE STATEMENT

This action involves a health care provider, a health benefits administrator, and multiple managed healthcare benefits plans. As such, discovery is likely to involve trade secrets, contracts including pricing information, patient health information protected by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (“HIPAA”), and other valuable commercial, financial, and/or proprietary information for which special protection from public disclosure and from use for any purpose other than prosecution of this action is warranted. Such confidential and proprietary materials and information consist of, among other things, confidential business or financial information, information regarding confidential business practices, or other confidential commercial information (including information implicating privacy rights of third parties), confidential patient health information, information otherwise generally unavailable to the public, or which

may be privileged or otherwise protected from disclosure under state or federal statutes, court rules, case decisions, or common law. Accordingly, to expedite the flow of information, to facilitate the prompt resolution of disputes over confidentiality of discovery materials, to adequately protect information the parties are entitled to keep confidential, to ensure that the parties are permitted reasonable necessary uses of such material in preparation for and in the conduct of trial, to address their handling at the end of the litigation, and serve the ends of justice, a protective order for such information is justified in this matter. It is the intent of the parties that information will not be designated as confidential for tactical reasons and that nothing be so designated without a good faith belief that it has been maintained in a confidential, non-public manner, and there is good cause why it should not be part of the public record of this case.

2. DEFINITIONS

2.1 Action: Noveon Surgery Center, Inc. v. Cigna Health and Life Insurance Company, et al. (Case No. 2:23-CV-00377-MWF-MAR).

2.2 Challenging Party: a Party or Non-Party that challenges the designation of information or items under this Order.

2.3 “CONFIDENTIAL” Information or Items: information (regardless of how it is generated, stored or maintained) or tangible things that qualify for protection under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 26(c), and as specified above in the Good Cause Statement.

2.4 Counsel: Outside Counsel of Record and House Counsel (as well as their support staff).

2.5 Designating Party: a Party or Non-Party that designates information or items that it produces in disclosures or in responses to discovery as “CONFIDENTIAL.”

2.6 Disclosure or Discovery Material: all items or information, regardless of the medium or manner in which it is generated, stored, or maintained (including,

1 among other things, testimony, transcripts, and tangible things), that are produced
2 or generated in disclosures or responses to discovery in this matter.

3 2.7 Expert: a person with specialized knowledge or experience in a matter
4 pertinent to the litigation who has been retained by a Party or its counsel to serve
5 as an expert witness or as a consultant in this Action.

6 2.8 House Counsel: attorneys who are employees of a party to this Action.
7 House Counsel does not include Outside Counsel of Record or any other outside
8 counsel.

9 2.9 Non-Party: any natural person, partnership, corporation, association, or
10 other legal entity not named as a Party to this action.

11 2.10 Outside Counsel of Record: attorneys who are not employees of a party
12 to this Action but are retained to represent or advise a party to this Action and have
13 appeared in this Action on behalf of that party or are affiliated with a law firm
14 which has appeared on behalf of that party, and includes support staff.

15 2.11 Party: any party to this Action, including all of its officers, directors,
16 employees, consultants, retained experts, and Outside Counsel of Record (and their
17 support staffs).

18 2.12 Producing Party: a Party or Non-Party that produces Disclosure or
19 Discovery Material in this Action.

20 2.13 Professional Vendors: persons or entities that provide litigation support
21 services (e.g., photocopying, videotaping, translating, preparing exhibits or
22 demonstrations, and organizing, storing, or retrieving data in any form or medium)
23 and their employees and subcontractors.

24 2.14 Protected Material: any Disclosure or Discovery Material that is
25 designated as "CONFIDENTIAL."

26 2.15 Receiving Party: a Party that receives Disclosure or Discovery Material
27 from a Producing Party.
28

3. SCOPE

The protections conferred by this Stipulation and Order cover not only Protected Material (as defined above), but also (1) any information copied or extracted from Protected Material; (2) all copies, excerpts, summaries, or compilations of Protected Material; and (3) any testimony, conversations, or presentations by Parties or their Counsel that might reveal Protected Material.

Any use of Protected Material at trial will be governed by the orders of the trial judge. This Order does not govern the use of Protected Material at trial.

4. DURATION

Even after final disposition of this litigation, the confidentiality obligations imposed by this Order will remain in effect until a Designating Party agrees otherwise in writing or a court order otherwise directs. Final disposition will be deemed to be the later of (1) dismissal of all claims and defenses in this Action, with or without prejudice; and (2) final judgment herein after the completion and exhaustion of all appeals, rehearings, remands, trials, or reviews of this Action, including the time limits for filing any motions or applications for extension of time pursuant to applicable law.

5. DESIGNATING PROTECTED MATERIAL

5.1 Exercise of Restraint and Care in Designating Material for Protection. Each Party or Non-Party that designates information or items for protection under this Order must take care to limit any such designation to specific material that qualifies under the appropriate standards. The Designating Party must designate for protection only those parts of material, documents, items, or oral or written communications that qualify so that other portions of the material, documents, items, or communications for which protection is not warranted are not swept unjustifiably within the ambit of this Order.

Mass, indiscriminate, or routinized designations are prohibited. Designations that are shown to be clearly unjustified or that have been made for an improper

1 purpose (e.g., to unnecessarily encumber the case development process or to
2 impose unnecessary expenses and burdens on other parties) may expose the
3 Designating Party to sanctions.

4 If it comes to a Designating Party's attention that information or items that it
5 designated for protection do not qualify for protection, that Designating Party must
6 promptly notify all other Parties that it is withdrawing the inapplicable designation.

7 5.2 Manner and Timing of Designations. Except as otherwise provided in
8 this Order (see, e.g., second paragraph of section 5.2(a) below), or as otherwise
9 stipulated or ordered, Disclosure or Discovery Material that qualifies for protection
10 under this Order must be clearly so designated before the material is disclosed or
11 produced.

12 Designation in conformity with this Order requires:

13 (a) for information in documentary form (e.g., paper or electronic
14 documents, but excluding transcripts of depositions or other pretrial or trial
15 proceedings), that the Producing Party affix at a minimum, the legend
16 "CONFIDENTIAL" (hereinafter "CONFIDENTIAL legend"), to each page
17 that contains protected material. If only a portion or portions of the material
18 on a page qualifies for protection, the Producing Party also must clearly
19 identify the protected portion(s) (e.g., by making appropriate markings in the
20 margins).

21 A Party or Non-Party that makes original documents available for inspection
22 need not designate them for protection until after the inspecting Party has indicated
23 which documents it would like copied and produced. During the inspection and
24 before the designation, all of the material made available for inspection will be
25 deemed "CONFIDENTIAL." After the inspecting Party has identified the
26 documents it wants copied and produced, the Producing Party must determine
27 which documents, or portions thereof, qualify for protection under this Order.
28 Then, before producing the specified documents, the Producing Party must affix

the “CONFIDENTIAL legend” to each page that contains Protected Material. If only a portion or portions of the material on a page qualifies for protection, the Producing Party also must clearly identify the protected portion(s) (e.g., by making appropriate markings in the margins).

(b) for testimony given in depositions that the Designating Party identify the Disclosure or Discovery Material on the record, before the close of the deposition all protected testimony.

(c) for information produced in some form other than documentary and for any other tangible items, that the Producing Party affix in a prominent place on the exterior of the container or containers in which the information is stored the legend “CONFIDENTIAL.” If only a portion or portions of the information warrants protection, the Producing Party, to the extent practicable, will identify the protected portion(s).

5.3 Inadvertent Failures to Designate. If timely corrected, an inadvertent failure to designate qualified information or items does not, standing alone, waive the Designating Party’s right to secure protection under this Order for such material. Upon timely correction of a designation, the Receiving Party must make reasonable efforts to assure that the material is treated in accordance with the provisions of this Order.

6. CHALLENGING CONFIDENTIALITY DESIGNATIONS

6.1 Timing of Challenges. Any Party or Non-Party may challenge a designation of confidentiality at any time that is consistent with the Court’s Scheduling Order.

6.2 Meet and Confer. The Challenging Party will initiate the dispute resolution process under Local Rule 37.1 et seq.

6.3 The burden of persuasion in any such challenge proceeding will be on the Designating Party. Frivolous challenges, and those made for an improper purpose (e.g., to harass or impose unnecessary expenses and burdens on other

1 parties) may expose the Challenging Party to sanctions. Unless the Designating
2 Party has waived or withdrawn the confidentiality designation, all parties will
3 continue to afford the material in question the level of protection to which it is
4 entitled under the Producing Party's designation until the Court rules on the
5 challenge.

6 **7. ACCESS TO AND USE OF PROTECTED MATERIAL**

7 7.1 Basic Principles. A Receiving Party may use Protected Material that is
8 disclosed or produced by another Party or by a Non-Party in connection with this
9 Action only for prosecuting, defending, or attempting to settle this Action. Such
10 Protected Material may be disclosed only to the categories of persons and under
11 the conditions described in this Order. When the Action has been terminated, a
12 Receiving Party must comply with the provisions of section 13 below (FINAL
13 DISPOSITION).

14 Protected Material must be stored and maintained by a Receiving Party at a
15 location and in a secure manner that ensures that access is limited to the persons
16 authorized under this Order.

17 7.2 Disclosure of "CONFIDENTIAL" Information or Items. Unless
18 otherwise ordered by the court or permitted in writing by the Designating Party, a
19 Receiving Party may disclose any information or item designated
20 "CONFIDENTIAL" only to:

21 (a) the Receiving Party's Outside Counsel of Record in this Action, as well
22 as employees of said Outside Counsel of Record to whom it is reasonably
23 necessary to disclose the information for this Action;

24 (b) the officers, directors, and employees (including House Counsel) of the
25 Receiving Party to whom disclosure is reasonably necessary for this Action;

26 (c) Experts (as defined in this Order) of the Receiving Party to whom
27 disclosure is reasonably necessary for this Action and who have signed the
28 "Acknowledgment and Agreement to Be Bound" (Exhibit A);

- 1 (d) the Court and its personnel;
- 2 (e) court reporters and their staff;
- 3 (f) professional jury or trial consultants, mock jurors, and Professional
- 4 Vendors to whom disclosure is reasonably necessary for this Action and who have
- 5 signed the “Acknowledgment and Agreement to Be Bound” (Exhibit A);
- 6 (g) the author or recipient of a document containing the information or a
- 7 custodian or other person who otherwise possessed or knew the information;
- 8 (h) during their depositions, witnesses, and attorneys for witnesses, in the
- 9 Action to whom disclosure is reasonably necessary provided: (1) the deposing
- 10 party requests that the witness sign the form attached as Exhibit A hereto; and (2)
- 11 they will not be permitted to keep any confidential information unless they sign the
- 12 “Acknowledgment and Agreement to Be Bound” (Exhibit A), unless otherwise
- 13 agreed by the Designating Party or ordered by the court. Pages of transcribed
- 14 deposition testimony or exhibits to depositions that reveal Protected Material may
- 15 be separately bound by the court reporter and may not be disclosed to anyone
- 16 except as permitted under this Stipulated Protective Order; and
- 17 (i) any mediator or settlement officer, and their supporting personnel,
- 18 mutually agreed upon by any of the parties engaged in settlement discussions.

19 **8. PROTECTED MATERIAL SUBPOENAED OR ORDERED PRODUCED**

20 **IN OTHER LITIGATION**

21 If a Party is served with a subpoena or a court order issued in other litigation

22 that compels disclosure of any information or items designated in this Action as

23 “CONFIDENTIAL,” that Party must:

- 24 (a) promptly notify in writing the Designating Party. Such notification will
- 25 include a copy of the subpoena or court order;
- 26 (b) promptly notify in writing the party who caused the subpoena or order to
- 27 issue in the other litigation that some or all of the material covered by the subpoena
- 28

1 or order is subject to this Protective Order. Such notification will include a copy of
2 this Stipulated Protective Order; and

3 (c) cooperate with respect to all reasonable procedures sought to be pursued
4 by the Designating Party whose Protected Material may be affected.

5 If the Designating Party timely seeks a protective order, the Party served
6 with the subpoena or court order will not produce any information designated in
7 this action as “CONFIDENTIAL” before a determination by the court from which
8 the subpoena or order issued, unless the Party has obtained the Designating Party’s
9 permission. The Designating Party will bear the burden and expense of seeking
10 protection in that court of its confidential material and nothing in these provisions
11 should be construed as authorizing or encouraging a Receiving Party in this Action
12 to disobey a lawful directive from another court.

13 **9. A NON-PARTY’S PROTECTED MATERIAL SOUGHT TO BE**
14 **PRODUCED IN THIS LITIGATION**

15 (a) The terms of this Order are applicable to information produced by a Non-
16 Party in this Action and designated as “CONFIDENTIAL.” Such information
17 produced by Non-Parties in connection with this litigation is protected by the
18 remedies and relief provided by this Order. Nothing in these provisions should be
19 construed as prohibiting a Non-Party from seeking additional protections.

20 (b) In the event that a Party is required, by a valid discovery request, to
21 produce a Non-Party’s confidential information in its possession, and the Party is
22 subject to an agreement with the Non-Party not to produce the Non-Party’s
23 confidential information, then the Party will:

24 (1) promptly notify in writing the Requesting Party and the Non-Party
25 that some or all of the information requested is subject to a confidentiality
26 agreement with a Non-Party;
27
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1 (2) promptly provide the Non-Party with a copy of the Stipulated
2 Protective Order in this Action, the relevant discovery request(s), and a
3 reasonably specific description of the information requested; and

4 (3) make the information requested available for inspection by the
5 Non-Party, if requested.

6 (c) If the Non-Party fails to seek a protective order from this court within 14
7 days of receiving the notice and accompanying information, the Receiving Party
8 may produce the Non-Party's confidential information responsive to the discovery
9 request. If the Non-Party timely seeks a protective order, the Receiving Party shall
10 not produce any information in its possession or control that is subject to the
11 confidentiality agreement with the Non-Party before a determination by the court.
12 Absent a court order to the contrary, the Non-Party shall bear the burden and
13 expense of seeking protection in this court of its Protected Material.

14 **10. UNAUTHORIZED DISCLOSURE OF PROTECTED MATERIAL**

15 If a Receiving Party learns that, by inadvertence or otherwise, it has
16 disclosed Protected Material to any person or in any circumstance not authorized
17 under this Stipulated Protective Order, the Receiving Party must immediately (a)
18 notify in writing the Designating Party of the unauthorized disclosures, (b) use its
19 best efforts to retrieve all unauthorized copies of the Protected Material, (c) inform
20 the person or persons to whom unauthorized disclosures were made of all the terms
21 of this Order, and (d) request such person or persons to execute the
22 "Acknowledgment and Agreement to Be Bound" that is attached hereto as Exhibit
23 A.

24 **11. INADVERTENT PRODUCTION OF PRIVILEGED OR OTHERWISE** 25 **PROTECTED MATERIAL**

26 When a Producing Party gives notice to Receiving Parties that certain
27 inadvertently produced material is subject to a claim of privilege or other
28 protection, the obligations of the Receiving Parties are those set forth in Federal

1 Rule of Civil Procedure 26(b)(5)(B). This provision is not intended to modify
2 whatever procedure may be established in an e-discovery order that provides for
3 production without prior privilege review. Pursuant to Federal Rule of Evidence
4 502(d) and (e), insofar as the parties reach an agreement on the effect of disclosure
5 of a communication or information covered by the attorney-client privilege or
6 work product protection, the parties may incorporate their agreement in the
7 stipulated protective order submitted to the court.

8 **12. MISCELLANEOUS**

9 12.1 Right to Further Relief. Nothing in this Order abridges the right of any
10 person to seek its modification by the Court in the future.

11 12.2 Right to Assert Other Objections. By stipulating to the entry of this
12 Protective Order no Party waives any right it otherwise would have to object to
13 disclosing or producing any information or item on any ground not addressed in
14 this Stipulated Protective Order. Similarly, no Party waives any right to object on
15 any ground to use in evidence of any of the material covered by this Protective
16 Order.

17 12.3 Filing Protected Material. A Party that seeks to file under seal any
18 Protected Material must comply with Civil Local Rule 79-5. Protected Material
19 may only be filed under seal pursuant to a court order authorizing the sealing of the
20 specific Protected Material at issue. If a Party's request to file Protected Material
21 under seal is denied by the court, then the Receiving Party may file the information
22 in the public record unless otherwise instructed by the court.

23 **13. FINAL DISPOSITION**

24 After the final disposition of this Action, as defined in paragraph 4, within
25 60 days of a written request by the Designating Party, each Receiving Party must
26 return all Protected Material to the Producing Party or destroy such material. As
27 used in this subdivision, "all Protected Material" includes all copies, abstracts,
28 compilations, summaries, and any other format reproducing or capturing any of the

1 Protected Material. Whether the Protected Material is returned or destroyed, the
2 Receiving Party must submit a written certification to the Producing Party (and, if
3 not the same person or entity, to the Designating Party) by the 60 day deadline that
4 (1) identifies (by category, where appropriate) all the Protected Material that was
5 returned or destroyed and (2) affirms that the Receiving Party has not retained any
6 copies, abstracts, compilations, summaries or any other format reproducing or
7 capturing any of the Protected Material. Notwithstanding this provision, Counsel
8 are entitled to retain an archival copy of all pleadings, motion papers, trial,
9 deposition, and hearing transcripts, legal memoranda, correspondence, deposition
10 and trial exhibits, expert reports, attorney work product, and consultant and expert
11 work product, even if such materials contain Protected Material. Any such archival
12 copies that contain or constitute Protected Material remain subject to this
13 Protective Order as set forth in Section 4 (DURATION).

14 **14. SANCTIONS**

15 Any willful violation of this Order may be punished by civil or criminal
16 contempt proceedings, financial or evidentiary sanctions, reference to disciplinary
17 authorities, or other appropriate action at the discretion of the Court.

18 ///

1 IT IS SO STIPULATED, THROUGH COUNSEL OF RECORD.

2
3 DATED: May 31, 2023

WILLIAMS WOLLITZ HAKAKIAN, PC

4 By: /s/ Mina Hakakian

5 Mina Hakakian

6 Attorneys for Plaintiffs

NOVEON SURGERY CENTER, INC.

7 DATED: May 31, 2023

COLE PEDROZA LLP

8
9 By: 

10 Kenneth R. Pedroza

11 Joshua C. Traver

12 Susannah D. Dahlberg

Attorneys for Defendants

13 CIGNA HEALTH AND LIFE INSURANCE

14 COMPANY and CONNECTICUT

GENERAL LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY

15
16 Pursuant to Local Rule 5-4.3.4(a)(2), I hereby attest that all signatories listed
17 above, and on whose behalf this filing is submitted, concur in the filing's content
18 and have authorized the filing.

19 DATED: May 31, 2023

COLE PEDROZA LLP

20
21 By: 

22 Kenneth R. Pedroza

23 Joshua C. Traver

24 Susannah D. Dahlberg

Attorneys for Defendants

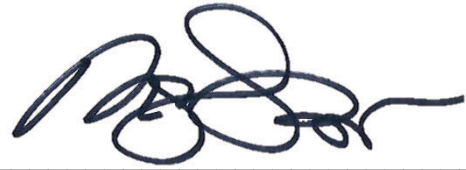
25 CIGNA HEALTH AND LIFE INSURANCE

26 COMPANY and CONNECTICUT

27 GENERAL LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY
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1 FOR GOOD CAUSE SHOWN, IT IS SO ORDERED.
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4 DATED: 8/28/2023



HON. MARGO A. ROCCONI
United States Magistrate Judge

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EXHIBIT A**ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND AGREEMENT TO BE BOUND**

I, _____ [print or type full name], of
 _____ [print or type full address], declare under penalty of perjury
 that I have read in its entirety and understand the Stipulated Protective Order that
 was issued by the United States District Court for the Central District of California
 on _____ [date] in the case of _____ [insert formal case name and the
 numbers and initials assigned to it by the court]. I agree to comply with and to be
 bound by all the terms of this Stipulated Protective Order and I understand and
 acknowledge that failure to so comply could expose me to sanctions and
 punishment in the nature of contempt. I solemnly promise that I will not disclose in
 any manner any information or item that is subject to this Stipulated Protective
 Order to any person or entity except in strict compliance with the provisions of this
 Order.

I further agree to submit to the jurisdiction of the United States District
 Court for the Central District of California for the purpose of enforcing the terms
 of this Stipulated Protective Order, even if such enforcement proceedings occur
 after termination of this action. I hereby appoint _____
 [print or type full name] of _____ [print
 or type full address and telephone number] as my California agent for service of
 process in connection with this action or any proceedings related to enforcement of
 this Stipulated Protective Order.

Date: _____

City and State where signed: _____

Printed name: _____

Signature: _____